THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Shergotty meteorite which fell in Shergotty village in Gaya district of Bihar on 25th August, 1865 is kept in the archival collection of Geological Survey of India (GSI) as GSI is the custodian of all meteorites found in India. The original weight of this meteorite was 4890 grams. Main bulk of this sample weighing 3600 grams is kept in GSI and small quantities of this meteorite were given to the following institutions by GSI as per exchange programme on meteorites;

(i) The United States Natural History Museum, Washington

(ii) Natural History Museum, Vienna

(iii) Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

(iv) American Museum of Natural History, New York

(v) British Museum of Natural History, London

Exhaustive scientific study on the meteorite was conducted by a Consortium of scientists (called Shergotty Consortium) from GSI, Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) (Ahmedabad) from India and those from reputed international institutions like National Aerounautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA, Max Plank Institute (MPI) of Germany and other scientific institutions. The findings have been published from time to time and an exhaustive account is available in the well known journal "Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta", Vol.50, No.4, p.875-1091, 1986.

Martian origin of this Shergotty meteorite has been deduced from the results of the studies indicating a strong similarity of major element composition of Shergotty with Martian soil determined by the Viking Spacecraft, especially by the indicator element Ferrous Oxide (FeO) and from the evidence of trapped noble gas and nitrogen composition in glasses in the meteorite.

(c) There are a number of scientific studies which are possible to carry out using Martian rocks. These include the origin and evolution of the Solar System, comparison of the evolution and development of Martian terrain, soil & atmosphere with those of the Earth and search for possible existence of life beyond our planet. These studies also help in improving the understanding of the Solar System and various geological and atmospheric processes on planets, including Earth.

Transfer of Schemes

2243. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a major initiative to devolve power to States, the Planning Commission has proposed that funds for 115 Centrally Sponsored development schemes be given directly to State Governments and they be made incharge of managing and implementing these schemes;

(b) if so, the schemes likely to be brought under jurisdiction of the State Governments;

(c) the Union Government's role in these schemes;

(d) whether some of the State Governments have been diverting the funds from one scheme to the other and important schemes are delayed due to this diversion; and

(e) if so, whether the Union Government will have any direct control to ensure that these schemes are fully implemented and the funds allocated for them are not diverted for other purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNAMALA D. SAVANOOR) : (a) to (e) An exercise has been done in Planning Commission on the question of transfer of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) to the States. A note on the subject has been sent to concerned Central Ministries/Departments and all States/ UT Governments for their comments. On receipt of the same, a revised and detailed note on the issues involved will be prepared for consideration of the Full Planning Commission and National Development Council (NDC). In line with the Approach Paper, a process of joint plan formulation and joint monitoring would also be evolved between the Planning Commission and the State Governments.

Use of Electronic Voice Sensor

2244. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether experiment of implant an electronic voice sensor in the inner ear of a totally deaf person has become successful and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) and (b) Implant of an electronic voice